

Maryland Numismatist



Affordable Half Dimes



Annual Meeting November 7 4PM

Ballot on Page 20

Autumn, 2015 Volume 43 – No. 3

**The
Maryland
State
Numismatic
Association,
Inc.**



The *MARYLAND NUMISMATIST* is the quarterly publication of MSNA and is distributed to all members in good standing without additional cost.

<http://mdstatenumisassn.org>

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The Board of Directors of MSNA is composed of the officers, past presidents and club representatives as listed to the right.

AMERICAN
NUMISMATIC
ASSOCIATION

ANA # C-73593 LC-42

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Club Mailing Address:

MSNA
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Table of Contents

Officer Listing	2
President's Message	4
Obituaries	6
Half Dimes for Less than Half a Million?	8
Local News	14
What's Your Sign? (Zodiac-themed medals)	15
MSNA Officers' Ballot	20
Membership Renewal and Application	21
Maryland Coin Show Dates	22
Club Member Listing	23
Advertising Rates	23

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President's Message



Two years goes by quickly but, at the MSNA Annual Meeting on November 7 at the Whitman Expo, my term as MSNA President will come to an end. It has been an eventful two years and I appreciate the people who entrusted me at the helm of this organization. While it is time for me to pass on the gavel to Jack Schadeegg, I wish I had more time to help him with the necessary changes that the Association needs to survive and thrive.

MSNA is at a critical point in its history. While other regional organizations build their strength through their shows, MSNA had to end the annual show in part because of the Whitman Expos. It became difficult to compete with a show of that scope and attempts to work with Whitman to make it a joint effort has not been as successful as planned.

I think that MSNA can be successful without a significant show. MSNA can be the central organization for numismatic education. It can do this using the Washington-Baltimore corridor as the central point that could attract collectors from the entire Mid-Atlantic region. Other ideas include establishing a speakers' bureau and working with the ANA to bring their Numismatic University to the area.

MSNA should not give up on an annual show. With a little creativity, MSNA can produce a different type of show from the Whitman Expo that would bring interest from all over the region. One idea would be to focus on education, exhibits, and activities. While the bourse should be an important part of any show, that will only attract collectors. Compelling speakers and activities will attract more than our members.

Finally, MSNA and its member clubs need to figure out how to attract younger members. While everyone can point to the handful of Young Numismatists and Generation X members, all of our clubs are overwhelmingly older and we are not getting younger.

Once the clubs attract members who are not eligible to be members of AARP, we need for those younger numismatists to work with MSNA for the benefit of the entire Maryland numismatic community. They will bring in new ideas and a new energy that could benefit all MSNA members. We should do more to recruit younger members.

(continued on page 6)

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What Have I Done?

I have handled, developed and sold many of the finest rare coin collections in the country including:

- Rare Colonial issues, including several 1792 issues
- Assemblage of specialized collections of all early U.S. coins by die variety
- Sale of the Wilkison Gold Pattern Collection in 1973
- Participation as a bourse dealer at hundreds of local, regional and national coin shows and conventions
- Attendance at every major U.S. auction held since 1968, representing as many as 25 bidders at the same time
- Consultation to corporations, dealers, and collectors in order to develop, build and expand collections as well as being instrumental in the promotion of the numismatic hobby
- Recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Professional Numismatists Guild

What Can I Do For You?

With total confidentiality, I will tailor my services to fit your needs, and:

- Assist in the formation (or location) of any U.S. coin or currency collection
- Counsel collectors, dealers and corporations on any aspect of the numismatic business or hobby
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- Appraise collections or individual pieces on an hourly basis
- Assist in the orderly disposition of holdings at current values



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Obituaries

Three of our stalwart members passed away recently. They were all very active in their local clubs and will not be easily replaced.

Paul Belschner (R-594) was the secretary for the Maryland Tokens and Medals Society (MTAMS) specializing in military tokens and medals, and also an active member of the Montgomery County Coin Club. He joined MSNA in 1987.

Clarence B. Schmitt (LM-45) of Crownsville, died January 24, 2015 at Fairfield Nursing Home in Crownsville. Born January 19, 1924 in Washington, DC, he was a lifelong member of the Elks, American Legion, VFW and the Annapolis Coin Club. He joined MSNA in 1989.

Henry W. Schab (R-24) was a charter member of MSNA who joined in 1972. "Hank" to his many friends, a U.S. Navy pilot during World War II who continued serving as an engineer at the Navy Experimental Station, as a volunteer at St. Mary's Catholic Church, as founder of the Colonial Coin Club and as town crier for a quarter century, died June 13 — one day shy of his 99th birthday.

"Dad never had a lot of coins, his son", Bill Schab, of Lewes, Del., said. Early on his interest was in the research and history of coins. Only later did he get into collecting. It took a long time to get six kids out of college." Frank Jarema, current president of the coin club, found Schab's energy and intellect infectious. "He was always giving of his time and knowledge. And he was very active in the club right up to the end. April was his last meeting." Schab also designed medals and cut dies for commemorative medals for St. Mary's 150th anniversary and the Annapolis' 350th anniversary celebration.

President's Message (continued from page 4)

Even though I will no longer be president, I will work with the MSNA Board to produce a new annual show. I hope that new show can be used to recruit new members for our clubs and MSNA. If you have an idea that you would like to see in a new show, please contact me at scott@barman.ws.

Until then, please join us at the Annual Meeting at the November Whitman Expo and let's hear your ideas for the future.



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Half Dimes for Less than Half a Million?

By Mark Benvenuto, MSNA #R-825

The recent auction of Part 1 of the D. Brent Pogue Collection highlighted some truly amazing half dimes, including an absolutely beautiful 1792 half *disme*, one of our nation's first federally-issued coins. A person's hopes and desires really soar when one of these astonishing rarities crosses the auction block. But even though it's fun to look at coins at that highest of levels, the starting bid of \$350,000 – more than the cost of most homes in the US – pretty quickly deflates any soaring hope that we'll ever own such a coin.

On the flip side of things though, a big-time auction can make us focus our attention on the same coins and see what is out there that is considerably more affordable than a single piece which costs close to half a million dollars. So, just what half dimes are available for prices we might seriously consider?

The initial output of just about any denomination of silver coins from the young Mint can politely be called spotty, and the fact that plenty of the earliest silver coins were made at the request of wealthy folks who deposited the silver and asked for specific coins in return meant that half dimes were relatively rare beasts even in the years they were being produced. Thus, any of the Flowing Hair design or the Draped Bust designs which were made up until 1805 are expensive pieces today. Even a piece down in G-4 condition will run about \$1,500 – probably more than most of us wish to ante up for a well-worn coin.

Despite this rough start for small silver, when the half dime denomination again got underway in 1829, now with the Capped Bust design work of Mr. William Kneass, the mintage figures jumped in a big way. That first year saw an official tally of 1,230,000 coins – a higher number than all the combined half dimes ever minted before, from 1792 to 1805. Adding to this good news, almost every year that the Capped Bust half dimes were produced saw mintages of over a million pieces. The 1832 and the 1837 come in a bit below that, but the 1835 saw over 2.7 million produced, and the 1836 came in only a bit behind, with 1.9 million. All this means that these half dimes are indeed collectible.

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We mentioned right at the beginning that we are looking for affordable half dimes, and now we have a series that just might qualify. So we need to ask: what is considered “affordable?” If the answer is \$10-\$20, well, we’re probably never going to see any affordable half dimes. But if \$100 still qualifies as affordable, a lot of possibilities open up for the Capped Bust half dimes. Since there are relatively few folks who collect these nine dates that make up the series, each of them are available for about \$100 in either F-12 or VF-20 grades. There are some varieties that are considered scarce, and that may cost a bit more. But one of each date is within reach for \$100 apiece.

Knowing that \$100 can get us a toehold in the half dime denomination, the next direction to look might be to the much more common Seated Liberty half dimes. The artwork of Mr. Christian Gobrecht graced every denomination of our silver coinage from these little half dimes all the way to the hefty silver dollars. On the half dimes, this design lasted from 1837 all the way to the end of the denomination’s lifetime in 1873. There are plenty of memorable dates, changes in design, and eye-popping rarities among these half dimes (see chart of major types below). A few of the notable ones, at least in terms of half dimes that are affordable, have to include: the 1838 with 2.2 million, the 1853 with 13.2 million, the 1854 with 5.7 million, the 1856 with 4.8 million, the 1857 with 7.2 million, the 1858 with 3.5 million, the 1861 with 3.3 million, and the 1872 with 2.9 million. Yes, there are plenty of other dates with mintages of more than a million coins, including some with the O of the New Orleans branch mint. Those with the S of the San Francisco branch mint never get up to the million mark. As well, there are some serious rarities, including the unique 1870-S. But it’s those common dates on which we wish to concentrate.

Catalog	Years	Weight	Type
KM-60	1837-38	1.34g	No stars, country name on reverse
KM-62.1	1838-40	1.34g	Stars but no drapery at elbow
KM-62.2	1840-53	1.34g	Stars and drapery at elbow
KM-76	1853-55	1.24g	Arrows at date
KM-A62.2	1856-59	1.24g	Stars and drapery at elbow
KM-91	1860-73	1.24g	Country name on obverse

We mentioned that the Capped Bust half dimes could be nabbed in decent conditions for about \$100. That same \$100 will land most of



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Walter Ostromecki Jr.

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**More information at: vnaonline.org and
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**Contact for
Saturday night
banquet
and bourse tables: Gregg Coburn
 P.O. Box 824
 Bealeton, VA 22712
 540-272-1524
 coburngregg@gmail.com**

**Contact for exhibits: Jack Hepler
 heplerj@juno.com**

these common Seated Liberty half dimes in better grades – EF-40 to AU-50. What's more, a look through any of the major pricelists indicate that some of the far less common dates among the series, especially those at the tail end of the series, are available in MS-60 for about \$150. That's not bad for a mint-state coin that is well over a century old.

In what probably qualifies as a really neat footnote to this series, for almost every year of the Seated Liberty half dimes, there were some proofs produced. They are not at all common, usually having a mintage below 1,000 coins, but they do command prices as low as \$600. Admittedly, that's not pocket change, but to acquire a proof Seated Liberty half dime at a price like this has got to be a great moment for anyone building a serious collection.

Even if you are a truly frugal collector (I have used that term for myself quite often, as it sounds so much better than 'colossal cheapskate'), it appears that \$200 can start a person off with a type set of two half dimes, one Capped Bust and one Seated Liberty. From there, each collector can assemble their own collection as they wish. But it's good to know that half dimes are still quite collectible, even if we can't do more than dream about a mint-state example of the 1792 half *disme*.

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Local News

The **Washington Numismatic Society** held their semi-annual pot-luck dinner at their June meeting. Members exhibited material and gave short talks on July holidays at the July meeting: U.S. Independence Day, Bastille Day, and Tisha B'Av. John Ryan spoke on French coins and rulers of the Renaissance and Baroque at their September meeting.

The **Montgomery County Coin Club** hosted **Julian Leidman** of Bonanza Coins who spoke on the state of the hobby in June. The July meeting was a special bourse night and the August meeting was a report on the ANA convention. In September MSNA Vice President **Jack Shadegg** talked on World's Fair memorabilia and collectibles. Jim Hirtle of Chesapeake Coin Company of Westminster, MD will give a presentation entitled, "How I sold Silver Dollars to the Uruguayan Ambassador" on October 13. Ellen Feingold will give MCCC a tour of the new Smithsonian money exhibit October 21 at 10 AM.

MSNA Treasurer **Simcha Kuritzky** placed three exhibits at the ANA World's Fair of Money in Chicago, and all took first in class: *Pidyon HaBen*, *Creating Modern Israel*, and *Engraved Coins of the Ba'al Shem Tov Amulet*. He also received an award from the Numismatic Literary Guild for the best World Paper Money article in a magazine for his article on Israel's money and graven images.

Coin Club Meeting Calendar (most months)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
First				Baltimore
Second	Cambridge, Colonial	Montgomery, West MD	Belmar, MR Catonsville	
Third	Colonial (some-times), Bel Mar	Washington Numis. Soc.		Baltimore
Fourth	Carroll County	Bowie	Middle River (MR)	MSNA Board

Welcome New Member

#835

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What's Your Sign?

Part Twenty- Eight: Sex Position Tokens Detail part 2

by Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

Last time I listed different dies used to produce the peep show tokens for signs Aries through Virgo. These tokens are usually found in yellow brass or red bronze, and I've also seen some plated with white metal. In the descriptions below, the description is followed by a (b) for yellow brass, (c) for red copper or bronze, and (w) for a white metal plating.



Obv #1



Obv #2



Obv #3



Rev #1



Rev #2



Rev #3

Libra

1. Obv. Balance scales, medium length denticles, Rev. small figures, wide space between denticles and inscription, simple © symbol (b,c)
2. Obv. small denticles, larger scales, Rev. large figures, little space between denticles and inscription, P © A symbol (b,c)
3. Obv. large denticles, small scales, Rev. sim to #2 but woman's face ill defined (b)



Obv #1



Obv #2



Obv #3



Rev #1



Rev #2



Rev #3

Scorpio

1. Obv. scorpion has no antennae, Rev. small denticles, large dots that almost touch their neighbors (b)
2. Obv. thin scorpion has antennae, thin body, Rev. small dots, medium denticles (b, w)
3. Obv. fat scorpion with bumps on body, Rev. large denticles, wide space between denticles and dots (c)



Obv #1



Obv #2



Obv #3



Rev #1



Rev #2



Rev #3

Sagittarius

1. Obv. thick denticles, small centaur, space between hooves and dots, Rev. small figures entirely surrounded by dots (b)
2. Obv. thin denticles, large centaur, right rear hoof merged w/dot, Rev. figures' heads pierces circle of dots, short denticles (b, w)
3. Obv. large denticles, large centaur, right rear hoof touches dot, Rev. figures' heads pierces circle of dots, medium denticles (b)



Obv #1



Obv #2



Obv #3



Rev #1



Rev #2



Rev #3

Capricorn

1. Obv. small goat-fish, tiny letters, Rev. Superior with no © (b,c)
2. Obv. large goat-fish, smooth scales and horns, Rev. Aware, large well-formed letters (b,w)
3. Obv. large goat-fish, bumpy scales and horns made of dots, Rev. Aware, thin letter E far from woman's face (c)
4. Obv. same as #3, Rev. same as #4 but woman's face hollow (w)



Obv #1



Obv #2



Obv #3



Rev #1



Rev #2



Rev #3

Aquarius

1. Obv. small water bearer, small thin letters, Rev. small figures, no © (b,c)

2. Obv. large water bearer, thick letters, space between large dots less than one-half dot width, Rev. large figures, ©, woman's hair distinct, three fingers raised on man's hand (c)

3. Obv. same as #2 but space between large dots more than half dot width, Rev. same as #2 but woman's hair and man's hand indistinct (b)



Obv #1



Obv #2



Obv #3



Obv #4



Obv #5



Obv #6



Obv #7



Rev #1



Rev #2



Rev #3



Rev #4



Rev #7

Pisces

1. Obv. small pair of fish, thick lettering and hyphen, Rev. small figures, no ©, center 4 leaves connected (b)

2. Obv. medium fish, eyes incuse, short denticles, Rev. large figures, ©, short denticles (b, w)

3. Obv. same as #2 but long denticles, Rev. same as #2 but long denticles (b)

4. Obv. large fish, eyes raised, long denticles, Rev. large figures, ©, short denticles (c)

5. Obv. same as #4, top fish stomach is without scales, Rev. as #4 (b)

6. Obv. same as #4, denticles on right don't reach rim, Rev. as #4 (b)

7. Obv. same as #4, denticles on right worn smooth, Rev. thick denticles and lettering (b)

I have the following four tokens that have sexual positions on both sides:

1. Aware like Gemini Rev 3, Ingenious like Virgo Rev 4
2. Friendly like Leo Rev 3, Provider like Pisces Rev 3
3. Versatile like Cancer Rev 3, Professional like Libra Rev 3
4. Professional like Libra Rev 3, Active like Sagittarius Rev 3

The peep show tokens with a zodiac sign are common, but the ones with two sexual position are scarce. Since Professional appears on two tokens paired with different positions (one is Versatile and the other is Active), there could be any number of different combinations in existence. Combination 1 is interesting because both Gemini and Virgo are associated with the planet Mercury, but none of the other pairings match planets. While Aware is usually paired with Gemini, it is also found paired with Capricorn.

Frank Brazzell also created a set of elongated cents with these same sexual positions back in the mid-1970s.

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Ballot

MSNA by-laws require an annual election in which all paid-up members can participate. Please include your name on the envelope and vote for one candidate per office or write in your candidate. The results will be announced at the MSNA annual meeting at 4 PM on Saturday, November 7 at the Baltimore Convention Center.

President

Jack Schadeegg

☐
☐

_____ (write-in)

Vice President☐

_____ (write-in)

Secretary

Bryce Doxzon

☐
☐

_____ (write-in)

Treasurer

Simcha Kuritzky, CPA

☐
☐

_____ (write-in)

Ballots should be mailed to be received no later than October 30 to:

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P. O. Box 13504
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Dedicated to attaining knowledge and fulfillment in Numismatics

Membership Application/Renewal

Date: _____ MSNA #: _____ (for renewal)

I hereby apply for membership/renewal in the Maryland State Numismatic Association, Inc., subject to its constitution & by-laws. (Please Print)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

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☐ Tax-deductible donation to MSNA \$ _____

If ANA member, please give us the ANA Number _____

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For junior membership please include:

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Fee of \$15 (club), \$10 (individual) or \$2 (under 18) must accompany this form for calendar year dues (\$5 individual after August 1). Life member upgrades are: \$300 for clubs, \$200 (age 50 & under), \$125 (51-65), \$75 (66 & over). You must be a regular member for 3 years before attaining life membership. Pay by check or money order.

Maryland Coin Show Dates

All shows have free admission. Only the Whitman show does not have free parking.

26 Sept. – Baltimore Friendly Monthly Stamp and Coin Show, Pikesville Hilton, 1726 Reisterstown Rd (I-695 exit 20) Pikesville, MD; 10-4. Also on **October 31, November 28, and December 26.**

4 Oct. – Westminster Coin and Currency Show, Westminster Fire Hall, 28 John Street, Westminster, MD; 9-4:30.

9-10 Oct. – Battlefield Coin Show, Grange Hall, 1 South 8th Alley, New Market, MD; 9:30-4:30.

18 Oct. – Cambridge Coin Show, American Legion Post 91, Route 50, Cambridge, MD; 11-5.

24-25 Oct. – CEO Coins, Currency & Treasures Ocean City Show, Ocean City (Roland E. Powell) Convention Center, 4001 Ocean Highway & 40th Street, Ocean City, MD; Sat. 9-6; Sun. 9-4.

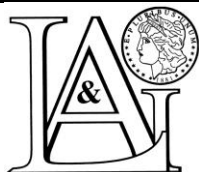
1 Nov. – Hunt Valley Coin and Currency Show, Holiday Inn, 9615 Deereco Road, Lutherville-Timonium, MD; 9-4.

5 - 8 Nov. – Whitman Baltimore Coin & Currency Convention, Baltimore Convention Center, 1 West Pratt Street; Thu 2-6, Fri-Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-3. *MSNA will hold its annual meeting on Saturday.*

21-22 Nov. – Frederick Coin and Currency Show, Elk Lodge #684, 289 Willowdale Drive, Frederick, MD; 9-4:30.

29 Nov. – Annapolis Coin and Currency Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, 2590 Solomon's Island Road (Route 2), Edgewater, MD; 9-4:30.

6 Dec. – Hunt Valley Coin and Currency Show, Holiday Inn, 9615 Deereco Road, Lutherville-Timonium, MD; 9-4.



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